

## Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

DIA WASHDC

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS BEL

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

S E C R E T LISBON 910

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINT, PO

SUBJ: INSTITUTIONALIZATION: THE AFM DEBATES ITS FUTURE

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REF: (A) LISBON 794; (B) LISBON 654

SUMMARY: OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) HAS CARRIED OUT WITHIN ITS TWO PRINCIPAL ORGANS AN INTENSE DEBATE OVER ITS FUTURE AND THE QUESTION OF ITS POSSIBLE INSTITUTIONALIZATION. TWO POSITIONS HAVE EMERGED. ONE WOULD ELIMINATE LEFT LEANING AFM COORDINATION COMMITTEE AND INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN AFM DECISION-MAKING BY MORE OFFICERS. THE OTHER CALLS FOR AN ACTIVE ROLE, INCLUDING REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND OVERSEEING OF WRITING OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION. EMB CONTACTS STATE THAT AFM MODERATES ARE GAINING THE UPPER HAND. OUTCOME, HOWEVER, IS STILL UNCERTAIN. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES' FEB. 10 ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTIONS FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IN APRIL HAS HEIGHTENED DEBATE WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) ABOUT ITS FUTURE ROLE IN PORTUGAL'S POLITICAL LIFE. UNDER THE RUBRIC "INSTITUTIONALIZATION," THE PACE AND INTENSITY OF THE DEBATE HAVE QUICKENED OVER THE PAST WEEK AS THE DISCUSSIONS HAVE EXTENDED INTO ALL STRATA OF THE AFM. THERE FOLLOWS AN OVERVIEW OF THESE CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WHICH, REGARDLESS OF THEIR OUTCOME, WILL HAVE A VITAL EFFECT ON PORTUGAL'S FUTURE.

2. THE AFM'S ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES (GROUP OF 200) MET IN PLENARY FEB. 7 TO DISCUSS KEY ISSUE OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF AFM--I.E. FUTURE POLITICAL ROLE OF MOVEMENT AS WELL AS ITS INTERNAL ORGANIZATION. PLENARY WAS UNABLE TO REACH A DECISION AT THAT SESSION. NEW PLENARY, ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR FEB. 14 WAS POSTPONED UNTIL FEB. 17 TO ALLOW DELEGATES TO CONSULT WITH THEIR UNITS AND TO GIVE SUPERIOR COUNCIL (COUNCIL OF 20) THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEAL WITH QUESTION. SUPERIOR COUNCIL ALSO MET FEB. 13 AND 14 TO DEBATE SUBJECT AND REACH ITS OWN POSITION.

3. NEED FOR CONSULTATION OF UNITS AGREED ON BY DELEGATES AFTER PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES, IN IMPASSIONED SPEECH TO PLENARY, SAID THAT ASSEMBLY MUST CHOOSE WHETHER AFM WILL BE "MOTOR OR ARBITER" OF PORTUGUESE POLITICAL LIFE.

4. THE MODERATE POSITION: TWO DIFFERENT PROPOSALS ON QUESTION OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION WERE PRESENTED FOR DEBATE AT FEB. 7 SESSION AND ARE STILL UNDER DISCUSSION. ONE PROPOSAL TAKES POSITION: (A)  
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THAT AFM SHOULD BE ARBITER, NOT MOTOR, OF REVOLUTION; (B) THAT AFM SHOULD BE ENLARGED TO INCLUDE ALL MEMBERS OF MILITARY; (C) THAT PROGRAM COORDINATING COMMITTEE SHOULD BE DISSOLVED AS IT UNACCEPTABLE AND DANGEROUS; (D) THAT MEMBERS OF AFM POLITICAL ORGANS SHOULD BE ELECTED BY UNIVERSAL MILITARY SUFFRAGE; AND (E) THAT SUPERIOR COUNCIL OF AFM SHOULD HAVE RIGHT TO APPROVE ALL LEGISLATION EMANATING FROM PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, I.E., THAT IT SHOULD DO WORK OF PRESENT COUNCIL OF STATE.

5. THE ACTIVIST POSITION: A COUNTERPROPOSAL WAS PRESENTED BY AFM PROGRAM COORDINATING COMMITTEE WITH SUPPORT OF PRIME MINISTER. THIS PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE AFM CREATE A REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL TO (A) GUIDE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS DIRECTLY; (B) OVERSEE WRITING OF CONSTITUTION; AND (C) MAINTAIN VIGILANCE OVER GOVERNMENT TO BE ELECTED IN SECOND ROUND OF ELECTIONS LATER THIS YEAR.

6. WE UNDERSTAND THAT PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES, IN SUPPORTING MORE ACTIVE MILITARY INTERVENTION IN POLITICS, ARGUED THAT SQUABBLING AMONG CIVILIAN POLITICAL PARTIES WAS CREATING TURBULENCE REMINISCENT OF YEARS 1910-26, WHICH EVENTUALLY LED TO EMERGENCE OF RIGHT-WING DICTATORSHIP. HE ARGUED THAT ONLY MORE, NOT LESS, MILITARY INTERVENTION IN POLITICAL LIFE COULD KEEP MILITARY UNIFIED AND PREVENT SPLITTING TO ADVANTAGE OF "REACTIONARIES."

7. AFM PINION APPEARS DIVIDED BETWEEN THE TWO PROPOSALS: THE AIR FORCE AS A BLOC TENDS TO OPPOSE THE ACTIVIST POSITION; THE NAVY SUPPORTS IT. THE ARMY IS SPLIT THREE WAYS--A MINORITY FAVORING THE ACTIVIST POSITION; ANOTHER FIRMLY OPPOSED TO IT; AND A LARGE FLOATING GROUP SEEKING, ABOVE ALL, A MORE PROFESSIONAL ARMY. (EXPRESSO FEB. 15 CARRIED SUMMARY OF THE TWO PROPOSALS.)

8. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THEIR UNITS, AFM ASSEMBLY RESUMED DISCUSSION OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN ALL DAY MEETING FEB. 17. SUPERIOR COUNCIL REPORTEDLY PRESENTED ASSEMBLY WITH A COMPROMISE PROPOSAL BETWEEN ACTIVIST AND MODERATE POSITIONS. THE DELEGATES APPARENTLY REACHED AGREEMENT ON CERTAIN FUNDAMENTALS OF FUTURE AFM POLITICAL ACTION, BUT DETAILS UNAVAILABLE SO FAR.

9. NEXT STEP WILL BE DISCUSSION OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION WITH  
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COALITION POLITICAL PARTIES AS WELL AS CERTAIN UNSPECIFIED PARTIES OUTSIDE THE COALITION. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, SUPERIOR COUNCIL, WHICH MEETS TODAY TO DISCUSS RESULTS OF FEB. 17 ASSEMBLY SESSION, WILL GUIDE INSTITUTIONALIZATION PROCESS IN FUTURE.

10. DISCUSSING INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF AFM FEB. 14 WITH DCM, SOCIALIST LEADER AND FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE JORGE CAMPINOS NOTED THAT MILITARY HAD PLAYED DOMINANT ROLE IN PORTUGUESE LIFE FOR THE PAST CENTURY AND A HALF--MOST RECENTLY PLACING SALAZAR IN POWER AND THEN OUSTING CAETANO. IT WAS ABSURD, CAMPINOS SAID, TO THINK THAT THE MILITARY WOULD RETURN TO THE BARRACKS. HE ALSO MAINTAINED IT WAS UNDESIRABLE, FOR ONLY A MILITARY-BACKED GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE THE STRENGTH TO COMBAT PORTUGAL'S ENTRENCHED ECONOMIC INTERESTS WHILE CREATING VIABLE REPRESENTATIVE

INSTITUTIONS.

11. ACCORDING TO CAMPINOS, A CONSTITUTIONAL LAWYER, INSTITUTIONALIZATION COULD BE EITHER GOOD OR BAD DEPENDING ON THE MODALITIES CHOSEN. HE CITED THREE BROAD POSSIBILITIES WHICH HE DEEMED AS FALLING INTO THE "GOOD" CATEGORY: (A) ASSUMING PORTUGAL WERE TO CHOOSE A FORM OF PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT, CAMPINOS THOUGHT THAT THE AFM COULD FUNCTION UNDER THE PRESIDENCY, BUT APART FROM A LEGISLATURE, WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS; (B) THE AFM COULD BE GIVEN A FORMAL ROLE AS GUARANTOR OF BASIC CIVIL LIBERTIES, WHICH WILL BE WRITTEN INTO A FUTURE PORTUGUESE CONSTITUTION; (C) THE AFM COULD BE GIVEN A DEFINED AND RESTRICTED VETO POWER OVER SPECIFIED ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE MILITARY.

12. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR AND LUKENS, CAMPINOS STATES THAT MODERATES HAD GAINED UPPER HAND OVER WEEKEND (LISBON 906). PRESIDENT'S CHIEF OF CABINET, FERREIRA DA CUNHA, ALSO TOLD LUKENS SAME THING ON FEB. 17, ADDING THAT MACHINERY OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION WOULD NOT BE PUT INTO IMMEDIATE EFFECT. CARLUCCI

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## Message Attributes

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